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News Release



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EPA Releases Additional Flood Water Sampling Data

The Environmental Protection Agency in coordination with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality today posted flood water sampling data for chemicals from September 4 and 6, 2005. The data has been reviewed and validated through a quality assurance process to ensure scientific accuracy. Hexavalent chromium and arsenic, in addition to lead which was previously detected on September 3rd, were detected at levels which exceeded EPA drinking water standards. These compounds would pose a risk to children only if a child were to drink a liter of flood water a day. Long-term exposure (a year or longer) to arsenic would be required before health effects would be expected to occur. Thallium was detected at one sampling location and while levels are slightly elevated, they are 10 times lower than levels at which there would be a health effect. Given these results, EPA and CDC advise the public and emergency responders to avoid contact with flood water when possible. If contact occurs, EPA strongly advises the use of soap and water to clean the areas if available.

The September 5th data is currently undergoing review and validation. The data will be released once this process is complete.

Flood water sampling data for biological pathogens from Sept 6 through 10, 2005 have also been posted for public review. E. coli levels are still greatly elevated and remain much higher than EPA's recommended levels for contact. The public and emergency responders should continue to avoid contact with flood water when possible. If contact occurs, EPA strongly advises the use of soap and water to clean areas if available.

EPA in coordination with federal, state and local agencies will continue to release data as it becomes available. To view the data, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/>

For more information about Louisiana response activities, go to www.deq.louisiana.gov

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